Section Two: Program Plan

2. PROGRAM RESPONSE ITEMS

This Section of the W-2 and Related Programs Plan addresses the agency's program plan for W-2 and Related Programs. The instructions are structured as follows. Where applicable, each main point will be comprised of the following components:

Summary:

This is a general description of the expectations. Program policies provide more detailed information about requirements. A listing of the Department's Policies and Procedures is found at the following web address: http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/pdf/dwsppcg.pdf.

<u>These summary items and program policies are also contract terms and conditions.</u>

Response Items:

This lists all information to which the agency must respond. The information is required to assess the quality of the W-2 Program.

2.1 Participant Flow

Summary:

Services to participants in W-2 and Related Programs must flow logically and smoothly for the participant, be readily accessible and customer friendly.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for participant flow. Include the following in your response:
A detailed diagram of the participant flow in your agency (and referrals to and from any relevant agencies). Please identify at what point in the participant flow all individuals who request assistance of your agency will be provided with the one page description of all benefits and services your agency is able to provide to the individual. All individuals requesting assistance must be provided with the one-page description of state programs documents prepared by the Department;

Where applicants/participants will gain access to the major W-2 and related programs components (include satellite offices and outstationing);

a) The roles the Resource Specialists (RS), Supportive Services Planners (SSP) and Financial and Employment Planners (FEP) will play in the delivery of services. Please describe as part of your response the process for providing information to new applicants about W-2 and other Job Center partner programs that will enable them to make an informed choice about which services are likely to support their efforts at employment and self-sufficiency;

b) The hours and days the W-2 agency will be open for participant services; and

c) How the hours and days will accommodate working families who need access to services on weekday evenings and weekends, and listing of the services available on weekday evenings and weekends.

2.2 Participant Employment Services

Summary:

The W-2 agency must work with employers in the community, Community Steering Committee, and Job Center partners to access unsubsidized jobs and to create Trial Jobs, Community Service Jobs, and W-2 Transition opportunities.

2.2.1 W-2 Employment Position Development

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for developing W-2 employment positions and expanding W-2 employment opportunities. Include the following in your response:

a) How your agency will access the general market for unsubsidized jobs and maximize opportunities to move W-2 participants immediately to such opportunities;

b) Your agency's strategy or plan for outreach, recruitment, and selection of public sector, private sector, profit and not-for-profit employers, or community-based organizations for W-2 employment positions and unsubsidized jobs, including any plans to target specific industries, occupations or job-market sectors for W-2 position development;

c) How your agency will coordinate with other Job Center partner programs that target employers (such as the Workforce Attachment and Advancement program, the Workforce Investment Act, Job Service and DVR); with the related services and activities of the area Workforce Development Board, with the local Job Center employer relations team; and with other local and regional business associations, community-based organizations, and economic development programs to maximize placement opportunities;

d) Steps your agency will take to develop each of the following:

- Trial Jobs;
- Community Service Jobs (CSJs), including "pro-rated" CSJs; and
- W-2 Transitions (W-2 Ts placements)

Your discussion should reference current efforts by your agency that demonstrate your agency's capability to develop an adequate number of W-2 employment positions.

e) How your agency will structure W-2 employment position slots so that the type of work performed by each position and the specific work activities to which participants are assigned in each slot correspond appropriately with the W-2 position definitions;

f) How your agency will collaborate with DVR and the medical community on employment position slots for W-2 participants with disabilities and other significant barriers to employment who may, on this basis, also be eligible for DVR services; and

g) Steps that your agency will take to assist a participant in one of the work experience components in the W-2 program (Trial Job, Community Service Job (CSJ), or W-2 Transition job (W-2 T) in his/her search for unsubsidized employment.

2.2.2 W-2 Participant Placement in W-2 Positions

Summary:

The primary role of the FEP is to assess individuals and determine appropriate placement in one of the W-2 employment positions on the W-2 ladder (also called tier) (Unsubsidized Employment, Trial Job, CSJ and W-2 T). Placing applicants and participants in the most appropriate employment position requires, at a minimum, an informal assessment. An informal assessment is defined as a process of gathering information about an individual and his or her family to determine the following:

- Individual's ability to become employed and remain employed;
- Services and activities necessary for the individual to become employed and remain employed;
- Appropriate placement of a participant on the W-2 employment ladder;
- Need for further screening by the FEP;
- Need for a formal assessment by a qualified assessing agency.

This determination must take into consideration a participant's work history, recent job search efforts, education, job skills, interests and abilities and other factors that will affect employment. An informal assessment is conducted for all W-2 applicants and is considered an ongoing case management activity. At a minimum, an informal assessment must be conducted prior to placing an individual in a W-2 employment position or moving a participant from one employment position to another.

For additional information on W-2 screening and assessment see DWS Administrator's Memos 02-08 (Screening For Barriers/Limitations Among W-2 Participants and Related Training for W-2 Workers) and 03-03 (W-2 Screening and Assessment).

Response Items:

Describe in detail your agency’s plan for assessing W-2 applicants and participants to ensure appropriate placement in one of the W-2 employment positions (i.e., Unsubsidized Employment, Trial Job, Community Service Job and W-2 Transition). Include the following in your response:

a) The process your agency will use to assess W-2 applicants in order to determine appropriate W-2 placement, including your agency's process for administering the Barrier Screening Tool to new W-2 participants;

b) The process your agency will use to assess W-2 participants on an ongoing basis to ensure appropriate W-2 employment position placement;

c) The process your agency will use to ensure assessment prior to moving a participant from one W-2 employment position to another W-2 employment position;

d) The process your agency will use to ensure adequate assessment documentation in CARES or its replacement; and

e) Any current efforts that support your agency's success in moving low-income individuals to unsubsidized jobs and self-sufficiency. If subcontracting for this function, the steps that will be taken to include the subcontractor in the transitioning of the W-2 participants to unsubsidized employment.

2.2.3 Employer Services

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for employer services, including the following elements:

a) The overall outreach plan for employers, specifying the industries or occupations that your agency will target;

b) Your agency's plan for training employers to assist them in developing effective management techniques to transition W-2 participants into jobs, and to help W-2 participants retain their jobs, obtain support services, and participate in career development activities; and

c) Proposed or existing coordination with other Job Center partners and programs that target employers, such as WAA.

2.2.4 Financial Employment Planning and Case Management

Summary:

The W-2 agency FEP, in the context of the Job Center model, must work with a participant to facilitate the participant's achievement of the maximum degree of self-sufficiency through work, preferably in an unsubsidized job.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for employment planning and case management. Include the following in your response:

a) A description of the process your agency will use to ensure that applicants are quickly evaluated and enrolled in appropriate activities to meet their self-sufficiency and employment needs;

b) How your agency will ensure that each FEP is creating an individualized employability plan for each W-2 participant;

c) How your agency will ensure that FEPs identify and assign creative activities that address an individual's unique skills, interests, capabilities and other life circumstances;

d) A description of the process your agency FEPs will use to monitor the participation and progress of each W-2 participant;

e) The means by which and the frequency of contact your agency FEPs will have with each W-2 participant throughout his or her time in W-2;

f) A description of the follow-up activities that your agency will provide to monitor W-2 participants placed in unsubsidized employment; and

g) A description of the process your agency will use to coordinate W-2 participants with other employment programs offered through the Job Center.

2.2.5 Serving a Population with Serious and Multiple Barriers to Employment

Summary:

Continuation on the W-2 caseload for a significant period of time often indicates serious and multiple barriers to employment. W-2 participants with serious and multiple employment barriers require a comprehensive array of case management supports to successfully transition into the workforce. In some cases, an in-depth formal assessment may need to be completed in consultation with a qualified assessing agency to determine the extent and severity of a participant's barriers.

Working with a population with multiple barriers to employment necessitates strong coordination and collaboration with other organizations and agencies.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for serving a population with serious and multiple barriers to employment. Include the following in your response:

a) How your agency will serve applicants or participants whose barriers require special screening and assessment, such as applicants/participants who lack basic skills in math and reading; lack a high school diploma; come from a violent family situation; have serious alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA) histories or issues; have mental, physical and other health issues; have a learning disability; face family issues, such as parenting a child with special needs; and/or have limited or no English proficiency. With respect to such applicants or participants and their barriers, please specify:

   1) In addition to the Barrier Screening Tool, the strategies that your agency will employ to ensure that barriers are identified and participants are appropriately referred for formal assessments;

   2) The process your agency will take to ensure that the assessing agency is qualified and demonstrates evidence of the following, including but not limited to:

      - Persons providing assessment services demonstrate competency or successful completion of training in the appropriate field;
      - Certification by an appropriate accreditation organization, e.g. the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission, Commission on Certification of Work Adjustment and Vocational Evaluation Specialists;
      - Persons providing assessment services demonstrate an understanding of the objectives of the assessment based on

referral information, referral questions, the initial interview, and the stated purpose of the evaluation;

- Assurance that an individualized written evaluation plan will be provided that can be used by the FEP to adapt W-2 activities to accommodate the needs of the participant; and
- Assurance of an employment or work-related focus (or, if an employment focus is not a part of the assessing agency's services, assurance that your agency will seek further vocational assessments beyond the qualified assessing agency's services);

3) The process your agency will use to ensure that the results of a formal assessment are used to determine appropriate W-2 placement, activities and necessary work-related accommodations. (A formal assessment is an assessment completed by DVR or a similar qualified assessing agency or business.);
4) How your agency's case management procedures will differ for these participants to accommodate the special needs of this population which mandates a more intensive approach to case management;
5) How your agency will ensure that these participants are engaged in appropriate activities that directly address their issues and barriers and the internal guidelines you will use to monitor engagement in these activities; and
6) How your agency will ensure that participants who are appropriate for referral for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) receive advocacy services during the SSDI/SSI application process and any follow-up hearings of appeal.

b) The process your agency will implement to ensure that SSPs and FEPs are adequately trained and otherwise equipped to effectively work with participants who have multiple and/or serious barriers to employment;

c) The approach your agency will take toward fostering working relationships with other agencies and organizations in your region in order to serve a population facing multiple barriers to employment; and

d) Strategies to make all language communication accessible, including use of bilingual staff, notices of language assistance, and accessible notices.

2.2.6 W-2 Time Limits

Summary:

Time limits stress mutual responsibility: government provides support and services designed to promote employment while participants are expected to prepare for and enter employment in return. The goal is to raise participants' earnings and employment rates and reduce reliance on government programs. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) recipients who were active participants in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program, starting October 1, 1996, and/or participants in W-2 employment positions (Trial Jobs, CSJ's and W-2 T's) under W-2, have a lifetime participation limit of 60 months (whether consecutive or not) in the AFDC program and/or W-2 employment positions.

Participation in any W-2 subsidized employment position (Trial Job, CSJ and W-2 T) is limited to 24 cumulative months.

There are opportunities for extensions of the 24-month and 60-month time limits. W-2 agencies may extend eligibility only when a W-2 participant qualifies for an extension by meeting the appropriate criteria. The W-2 agencies must work intensively with participants prior to and during extension periods to help the participant overcome barriers or challenges.

Include the following in your response:

a) The process your agency will use to monitor individuals approaching their twenty-four (24) or sixty (60) month time limits;

b) The special strategies your agency will employ to assist individuals who are nearing their twenty-four (24) or sixty (60) month time limits;

c) The tools your agency will use to concentrate efforts for families who are seeking or who have been granted extensions to their twenty-four (24) or sixty (60) month time limits;

d) The special actions your agency will take to ensure that individuals are aware of time limits and kept informed of their time limit status (for example, special motivational sessions on time limits, training and brochures);

e) The process your agency will use to ensure that time limit extension criteria are applied consistently, fairly and according to policy for all W-2 participants, particularly for those who have exhausted their time limits and are found ineligible for extensions; and

f) The actions your agency will take to provide service for individuals who have exhausted their time limits and are found ineligible for extensions.

2.3 Food Stamp and Employment Training

Summary:

The W-2 agency must operate the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program. The W-2 agencies must provide services that will allow Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) and non-ABAWD FSET participants to meet all federal and State requirements for maintaining their eligibility for food stamps.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for the FSET program. Include the following in your response:

a) How the FSET program and the W-2 program will interface with each other;

b) How the W-2 agency will coordinate the CARES or its replacement referral and disenrollment processes with the Food Stamp agency;

c) The process for enrolling and engaging participants in the required and appropriate FSET components/statuses, and monitoring to ensure full engagement of each participant under the Department's program policies;

d) The process for requesting, determining and imposing FSET sanctions and ABAWD strikes, and monitoring of the process between the W-2 agency and the Food Stamp agency;

e) The process for identifying FSET participants who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalency and engaging those individuals in the basic education components;

f) The program services your agency plans to provide to FSET participants; and

g) What monitoring or tracking will be done to ensure that all ABAWDs are being enrolled, served and correctly reported in the Department's electronic program and payment systems.

2.4 Job Retention and Advancement

Summary:

The W-2 agency's efforts to help participants retain and advance in employment are critical to ensuring participants achieve long term self-sufficiency and are consistent with the direction of the W-2 program. W-2 agencies must provide Case Management Follow-Through (CMF) services for a minimum of six (6) months to persons leaving employment positions for unsubsidized employment.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for job retention and advancement. Include the following in your response:

a) The process your agency will use to provide CMF services to recent W-2 "graduates" for the minimally required six (6) month period (or if longer, for how long) and to follow-up on participants leaving FSET for unsubsidized employment;

b) A description of the services your agency will provide to participants in the CMF category, such as education, training, and support services, and how frequently they will be provided; and

c) How your agency will coordinate job retention and advancement services provided out of the base W-2 contract with other available programs, such as Workforce Attachment and Advancement (WAA), Welfare to Work (WtW), and Children First. Also, describe how your agency will assist CMF participants in transitioning to these programs.

2.5 Education and Training Services

Summary:

All W-2 employment position participants may take part in education and training activities, and education and training are key components of the CSJ and W-2 Transition positions. The W-2 agency shall emphasize the importance of education and training as an ongoing part of joining and advancing in the workforce.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for education and training services (making education and training opportunities available to eligible W-2 participants). Include the following in your response:

a) Strategies your agency will employ to identify each participant's education and training needs, including how your agency will identify barriers individual participants may face to successful completion of education and training programs;

b) How your agency will identify education and training activities appropriate to each participant's needs, encourage each participant to complete the designated course of training, and promote continuing education and training. Include in your discussion what accommodations your agency will provide to help participants overcome barriers to engaging and succeeding in education and training efforts;

c) How your agency will make use of the education and training opportunities available through the Workforce Attachment and Advancement, Welfare to Work, and Workforce Investment Act programs;

d) How your agency will make use of and inform clients about W-2 program provisions permitting a limited aggregate number of hours of education and training per year to count toward program participation requirements;

e) How your agency will foster effective partnerships with the technical colleges, UW-Extension, volunteer literacy providers and other training providers to deliver adult basic education, literacy and English-as-a-Second Language tutoring, post-employment skills training, and continuing education opportunities;

f) How your agency will work with Community Steering Committee (CSC) and technical college boards to identify technical college education programs that are likely to lead to employment;

g) How your agency will provide for your participants' educational needs should educational providers not be readily available in your area; and

h) How your agency will:

- Ensure that the education and training programs to which clients are assigned are appropriate to the client needs as identified under points (a) and (b) above;

- Monitor, evaluate and ensure the quality of the education and training programs to which clients are assigned;

- Monitor participant attendance at, performance in and completion of education and training programs in which participants are enrolled, including Grade Point Averages where appropriate or required;

- Manage the aggregated education and training hours of W-2 T and CSJ participants in keeping with W-2 program rules; and

i) How your agency will measure its success in meeting participants' education and training needs.

2.5.1 Support and Other Services

2.5.1.1 Food Stamps and Medicaid

Summary:

W-2 agencies are responsible for collaborating with Income Maintenance (IM) agencies to ensure program access and timely delivery of services to Food Stamp and Medicaid applicants and customers.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for coordination and collaboration with the IM agency and how your agency will provide information about Food Stamps and Medicaid to applicants and customers. Include the following in your response:

1) How your agency will assure the provision of information for Food Stamps and Medicaid to applicants and customers in need of food and/or health care assistance; and
2) How will the W-2 agency and the IM agency provide services, including scheduling of appointments recognizing that some applicants and customers will need services from both agencies.

2.5.1.2 Child Care

Summary:

The W-2 agency must determine eligibility for child care within the performance requirements developed by the Department and cooperate with the county or tribal child care administering agency to assist child care applicants and eligible families in finding appropriate child care.

Current State law requires W-2 agencies to determine eligibility for child care subsidies and to refer eligible individuals to local child administrative agencies (county Departments of social or human services or tribal governing agencies with contracts to administer child care subsidies) for child care assistance.

A statewide automated system uses data entered to establish eligibility, generate authorizations, make payments to providers, recover overpayments, and send notices to parents and child care providers.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for Child Care services. Include the following in your response:

a) How your agency will inform child care applicants and eligible families about child care subsidies and your agency's process to determine their needs for child care;
b) How your agency will determine eligibility for child care applicants within the performance requirements established by the Department, including how your agency will assure a timely referral to the local child care administering agency and a timely response to child care applicants and participants, and including a flow chart of this process; and
c) How your agency and the Community Steering Committee will work to ensure an adequate and timely supply of child care, including infant child care, sick child care, second and third shift child care, weekend child care, culturally appropriate care for children with limited English, and child care accessible for

children with disabilities, for W-2 participants in subsidized and unsubsidized employment, W-2 applicants during job search and orientation activities, and other families eligible for child care.

2.5.2 Transportation

Summary:

Agencies must facilitate the transportation options necessary for participants to get to and from assigned work activities, education and training assignments and child care.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for transportation services. Include the following in your response:

a) Your agency's expectations of the Community Steering Committee (CSC) and Children's Services Network (CSN) for transportation services. (Agencies are required to work with the CSC and CSN to ensure that transportation options are available for people participating in W-2.);

b) The resources in terms of staff hours or funding that your agency will dedicate to facilitating transportation options for W-2 participants (for example, if your agency will have a transportation coordinator), including the percentage of your allocation your agency will target to meeting participant's' transportation needs;

c) Strategies your agency has adopted or proposes to help participants manage the number and length of commute trips associated with training and work activities (including trips associated with child-care);

d) Strategies your agency has adopted or proposes for partnering with other providers of employment and training services, employers and employer groups, community-based organizations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and public and private transit operators to:

1) Where public transportation is available, facilitate access to public transit services;

2) Where public transportation is available, address gaps in services and mismatches between transit routes and schedules and the hours and locations of work and training opportunities;

3) Facilitate group transportation solutions (such as van and car pools), including information about whether these proposals/ideas are regional in nature (i.e., more than one W-2 geographic area);

4) Facilitate reliable personal access to a functioning automobile, particularly where public transportation and opportunities for group solutions are limited or non-existent; and

5) Ensure that participants have access to timely, comprehensive and accurate information about transportation options.

e) The process your agency will use to ensure that, as appropriate, participants and transportation providers receive timely and correct reimbursement.

2.5.3 Workforce Attachment and Advancement

Summary:

The Workforce Attachment and Advancement program is jointly administered by W-2 agencies and Workforce Development Boards. DWD will conduct a joint planning process, separate from this process, prior to January 1, 2004.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's ideas for planning for administering WAA. Include the following in your response:

a) How your agency will coordinate with the Workforce Development Board on the joint planning process;

b) Regardless of whether the W-2 agency or the WDB manages the WAA activities in your geographic area, how your agency will assure seamless and coordinated services to W-2 participants transitioning to WAA; and

c) How your agency will consult with local partners, such as child support agencies, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) agencies and technical colleges to administer WAA most effectively.

2.5.4 Job Access Loans

Summary:

Job Access Loans (JALs) are designed to meet basic expenses of participants related to obtaining or maintaining employment and must be repaid either in cash or through a combination of cash and in-kind activities. The W-2 agency must keep the Department's payment and program systems current in the same expense period as the loan is issued or repayment is collected.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for Job Access Loans (JALs). Include the following in your response:

a) How your agency will determine eligibility and need for JALs, including issuance of emergency loans within twenty-four (24) to ninety-six (96) hours of loan approval;

b) Procedures your agency will use to pursue the repayment in full within the repayment period, including the method for monitoring volunteer service hours which may be used as a repayment method;

c) How your agency will monitor its JAL collection rate (amount collected as compared to amount loaned), for individual loans and total JAL amounts;

d) How your agency's use of JALs will help people obtain/maintain employment; and

e) If you are a currently contracted W-2 agency that has not issued JAL loans, what barriers prevent you from doing so.

2.5.5 Learnfare

Summary:

The primary goal of Learnfare is to provide services for children to enhance regular school attendance that will allow successful completion of school. The W-2 agency shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with all aspects of Learnfare requirements for families under the W-2 program, including development of Learnfare Case Management Plans in cooperation with children, parents, teachers, and other professionals.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan to meet the Learnfare requirements. Include the following in your response:

a) How your agency will enforce the Learnfare program requirements for all school aged children living with a parent who is in a W-2 employment position, including the provision of case management services to target groups, determination of good cause, and the imposition of sanctions/fines for non-compliance;
b) How your agency will provide a comprehensive overview of Learnfare requirements to all W-2 participants, verify the current enrollment of all school aged children, and determine whether or not a child is targeted for mandatory case management participation;
c) How your agency will assure that Learnfare Case Management Plans for targeted youth are developed, implemented, monitored, and, in a timely manner, reassessed at a minimum of every six (6) months; and
d) How your agency will ensure that all Learnfare procedures are followed prior to the imposition of any Learnfare penalty.

2.5.6 Refugee Cash Assistance

Summary:

The W-2 agency is responsible for administering Refugee Cash Assistance.

The W-2 agency will administer Refugee Cash Assistance in accordance with federal rules and regulations.

Response Item:

Describe your agency's plan for Refugee Cash Assistance. Include the following in your response:

Your agency's plans to administer the Refugee Cash Assistance eligibility determinations, including who will determine eligibility, how the language needs of arriving refugees will be met, how services will be coordinated with voluntary resettlement agencies and FSET, and how applicants will be referred to refugee employment and training services.

2.5.7 Emergency Payments

Summary:

This is a program that a W-2 agency must administer to assist a participant in a W-2 T, CSJ, Trial Job, or Custodial Parent of an Infant placement who is experiencing extreme hardship while awaiting a first payment.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan to administer Emergency Payments and include the following in your response:

a) Your agency's definition of extreme financial hardship: and

b) The process the agency will use to inform newly placed participants about emergency payments and to determine participant eligibility for the payment.

2.5.8 Earned Income Credit and Other Tax Credits

Summary:

The W-2 agency is responsible for training participants and informing employers on the advantages and availability of the federal and state Earned Income Credit, the Wisconsin Homestead Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

Response Item:

Describe your agency's plan for federal and state Earned Income Credit and other applicable credits, including how your agency will educate and inform employers and participants about the federal and state Earned Income Credits, the Wisconsin Homestead Credit and the Child Tax Credit, and encourage and assist W-2 participants to apply for the these credits, as appropriate.

2.5.9 Minor Parents Services

Summary:

The W-2 agency must provide services that will support the minor parent's completion of high school and career development; encourage the use of family planning services; and improve parenting and life skills in order to strengthen the individual's ability to become an employed, self-sufficient adult.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for services for minor parents. Include the following in your response:

a) A list and brief description of the types of services that will be offered to minor parents by your agency and the methods for providing those services;

b) How your agency will ensure the minor parent is informed of the broad range of community and government services available to assist minor parents;

c) A list of the social service agencies that will be your agency's first points of referral when a minor parent is determined not to be living in an appropriate adult supervised living arrangement; and

d) How your agency will work with schools and other community agencies to ensure that this population is aware of the services you provide.

2.5.10 Non-custodial Parent Services

Summary:

Non-custodial parents (NCPs) may be eligible to receive services through the following programs: W-2 NCP case management, Welfare to Work, Workforce Attachment and Advancement, Food Stamp Employment and Training, Workforce Investment Act, and Children First. The W-2 agency shall provide outreach and assistance in obtaining these services to support NCPs in becoming financially able to pay child support.

Response Item:

Describe your agency’s plan to provide NCPs with information about the available W-2 services and other programs that serve NCPs (such as Welfare to Work and Workforce Attachment and Advancement). Describe the services your agency provides to NCPs and the tools your agency uses to recruit and engage NCPs in these services.

2.5.11 Child Support

Summary:

Child support payments are critical to the financial independence of single-parent families. Thus the W-2 agency is an important link between the W-2 applicant and the child support agency (CSA).

Response Items:

Describe your agency’s plan for Child Support. Include the following in your response:

a) Your agency's plan to train workers to access necessary child support information in KIDS to ensure that workers can process applications accurately;

b) How your agency will process referrals for non-cooperation with child support participation requirements and determine good cause for failure to cooperate, including (i) who will be responsible for handling non-cooperation notification from KIDS, (ii) the timeframe in which good cause decisions will be rendered and (iii) the process used to determine if good cause for non-cooperation exists;

c) How your agency will ensure that W-2 staff complete the appropriate CARES or its replacement screens in order to provide the CSA with all necessary information; and

d) Your agency's plan to provide the regional child support publications to W-2 applicants.

2.5.12 Emergency Assistance

Summary:

The W-2 agency is responsible for administering the Emergency Assistance (EA) program to eligible needy families.

Response Item:

Describe your agency's plan to administer Emergency Assistance to eligible needy families according to the Department's Policies and Procedures. Include the following in your response:

d) Describe the process your agency uses to refer families to EA and the process for determining eligibility;

e) Identify the staff responsible for tracking EA grants and denials in the Emergency Assistance Tracking System (EATS); and

f) Describe how your agency will provide assistance in a timely manner.

2.5.13 Supportive Service Plan

Summary:

W-2 agencies must ensure that participants who are leaving a W-2 payment placement, in a case management placement or are diverted from W-2 participation are offered assistance in developing a supportive service plan. The goal of a supportive service plan is to proactively help individuals address family and work-related needs. The supportive service plan must include information and assistance in connecting with supportive services available within the agency as well as other resources that are a part of the agency's Children's Services Network. The plan also must include strategies for addressing family and work emergencies before these situations result in family crisis and loss of employment.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan to develop supportive service plans with participants who are leaving a W-2 payment placement, in a case management placement, or are diverted from W-2 participation.

2.5.14 Dispute Resolution and Fact Finding

Summary:

The agency must establish the appropriate dispute resolution process for applicants or participants to request a review of the W-2 agency's actions, either Fact Finding or Fair Hearing, as prescribed by the administrative rules. Notice of Appeal rights will be discussed with applicants and participants at the time of application. For every negative action, denial, or sanction, a notice is automatically generated by the CARES or its replacement system, again explaining the applicant's and participant's right to appeal.

Applicants or participants who believe that an agency decision regarding any component of W-2 (e.g., employment positions, Job Access Loans, Child Care, Learnfare, Emergency Assistance) is incorrect, may request a Fact Finding Review by the W-2 agency within forty-five (45) calendar days from the date of the CARES or its replacement decision notice, or within 45 days from the effective date of the decision announced in the notice, whichever is later. W-2 payments shall not be continued pending the Fact Finding Decision, with the exception of requests for a Fact Finding Review within ten (10) calendar days of the notice due to a Learnfare penalty.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for dispute resolutions and Fact Finding. Include the following in your response:

a) Your dispute resolution and Fact Finding processes, including but not limited to your internal procedures for accepting a fact finding request so that it ensures:

   1) an easy, workable method of request for applicants and participants; and

   2) that applicants and participants understand the deadline for submitting fact finding requests.

b) How your agency will advise W-2 participants of their right to appeal denial or termination decisions; and

c) The Fact Finder's independence and knowledge of their programs.

2.5.15 Benefit Overpayment Recovery

Summary:

Claims must be established on CARES or its replacement, regardless of error type, before the last day of the quarter following the quarter in which the overpayment was discovered. W-2 agencies are responsible for the establishment of W-2 related overpayments and their recovery, which includes W-2, Job Access Loans, and child care overpayments.

In addition, the W-2 agencies shall establish procedures for recovery of overpayment claims and accounting for collections received as required by the Department's Policies and Procedures established in accordance with sections 49.195(3) and 49.161 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Response Item:

Describe your agency's plan for recovering benefit overpayments, including how your agency will determine overpayments, recover overpayments and establish claims for recovery and reimbursement.

2.5.16 Public Assistance Fraud

Summary:

Fraud Prevention and Detection. The W-2 agency must assure the integrity of all services and benefits provided to participants under the W-2 program through a program of fraud prevention, detection and referral. The initial fraud prevention and detection approach is front-end verification (FEV) which is applied to verification and referrals for all services and benefits that provide value to participants. Fraud prevention activities are required for those activities which provide services or benefits and which meet the established error-prone profile, as described in the Income Maintenance Manual issued by the Department of Health and Family Services. The agency determining the eligibility is the agency responsible for the prevention and detection activities, regardless of which agency issues the benefit. Additional information sources used shall include, but not be limited to, automated cross matches generated by the Department.

Fraud Investigations. The W-2 agency must make a referral to the state designated investigative service provider, as described in the Department's Policies and Procedures, to perform investigations of allegations of overpayment and potential fraudulent activity in the W-2 program, by both participants and service providers. An Intentional Program Violation (IPV), a.k.a. fraud, is defined as a situation when anyone who, with knowledge and purpose, (a) made false statements, (b) suppressed facts, (c) misrepresented circumstances, (d) or failed to report a change in circumstances, in order to obtain or maintain eligibility for any W-2 services, including child care. Procedures set by the Department shall assure that the W-2 agency will cooperate with the prosecution of fraud cases relating to income maintenance/public assistance programs specified in s. 49.197(3) Wisconsin Statutes. The W-2 agency shall cooperate with Department requests for information in connection with Department fraud inquiries in accordance with section 49.143(2)(f) and section 49.143(5) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Impose Penalties for IPV Determinations. The W-2 agency is responsible for the complete and accurate reporting of the fraud referral and investigation in CARES or its replacement, specified by Department policies and procedures in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes and federal regulations. W-2 agencies have the option of establishing local agreements to delegate these activities if appropriate.

Fraud Prevention and Detection Plan. The W-2 agency is responsible for the preparation of a fraud prevention and detection plan as required in the Response Items below. The Plan must be submitted to the DHFS Fraud Prevention Unit within 30 days of the effective date of their contract. A copy of the notification/submittal must be provided to the Contract Manager. This is keeping with shared services agreements between this Department and DHFS.

Response Items:

Describe your agency's plan for fraud prevention and detection, fraud investigations and imposing penalties for IPVs. Include the following in your response:

a) Your agency's plan for fraud prevention activities, including staff position titles and total FTEs assigned to such functions, and your plan for identifying erroneous or fraudulent requests for services and preventing or correcting such requests;

b) How your agency has and will refer potential fraud for investigation to the State's contracted agency for fraud investigations;

c) Your agency's plan for accurate reporting of fraud referrals and investigations; and

d) Your agency's error-prone profile.